

Message Text

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43

ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8729

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L GABORONE 1805

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, RH, ZA, BC

SUBJECT: LUSAKA DECLARATION OF FRONT-LINE PRESIDENTS

REF: STATE 239436

1. PRESIDENT KHAMA NOT BEING AVAILABLE, CHARGE' DELIVERED
REFERENCED STATEMENT TO PRESIDENT'S PRIVATE SECRETARY (LEGWAILA)
AT 0945 SEPTEMBER 27.

2. LEGWAILA, WHO ATTENDED THE "FRONT LINE" PRESIDENT'S MEETING
IN LUSAKA SEPT 25-26, SAID HE WAS GLAD TO SEE USG HAD READ THE
PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT AS A POSITIVE ONE. HE WAS QUICK TO POINT
OUT THE PRESIDENT KHAMA DID NOT LIKE THE TWO FINAL PARAGRAPHS OF
THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT, I.E. THOSE SAYING ACCEPTANCE OF THE
SMITH PROPOSALS WOULD BE TANTAMOUNT TO LEGALIZING HIS REGIME,
AND THAT THE PRESIDENTS REMAINED COMMITTED THE "THE ARMED
STRUGGLE". BUT PRESIDENT KHAMA HAD BEEN COMPELLED TO GO
ALONG WITH THE OBJECTIONABLE WORDING FOR THE SAKE OF ACHIVING
CONSENSUS. LEGWAILA SAID THE PRESIDENT WAS VERY MUCH AWARE
OF THE NEED TO AVOID GIVING SMITH ANY REASON TO BACK OUT OF HIS
COMMITMENTS BECAUSE OF REAL OR PERCEIVED OBSTRUCTIONISM ON
THE PART OF THE AFRICANS.

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3. LEGWAILA, BASED ON HIS OBSERVATIONS AT THE CONFERENCE, COMMENTED ON THE FOLLOWING POINTS:

A. THE CRITICAL PROBLEM NOW IS TO CONVINCE THE BRITISH TO ARRANGE THE CONSTITUTIONAL CONFERENCE, AND TO GET SMITH TO ACCEPT THESE ARRANGEMENTS. UP TO NOW, LEGWAILA SAID, THE UK HAS SAID IT WANTED NOTHING TO DO WITH ORGANIZING A CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY; SMITH, FOR HIS PART, WOULD BE ADMITTING HIS OWN LACK OF INDEPENDENCE AND LEGITIMACY IF HE WERE TO HAVE THE CONVOKING OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY TAKEN OUT OF HIS HANDS.

B. PRESIDENT KHAMA (PERHAPS WE SHOULD READ "LEGWAILA") FELT THE FIRST REACTION TO SMITH'S SPEECH SHOULD HAVE COME FROM A UNITED ZIMBABWEAN GROUPING ITSELF, RATHER THAN FROM THE "FRONT LINE" PRESIDENTS. BUT APPARENTLY THE OTHER PRESIDENTS BELIEVED THEY WOULD BETTER BE ABLE TO ENFORCE THE ZIMBABWEAN PARTIES' ACCEPTANCE OF NEGOTIATIONS IF THE PRESIDENTS SPOKE FIRST.

C. PRESIDENT MACHEL BLEW IN, MADE A SPEECH, AND BLEW OUT AGAIN. HE WAS NOT AS UNALTERABLY OPPOSED TO THE PROPOSALS AS MANY HAD EXPECTED HIM TO BE. WHILE HE DID HAVE MANY OBJECTIONS, HE DID SEEM READY TO BE CONVINCED. HIS PRIMARY CONCERN APPEARED TO BE THAT SMITH MIGHT ONCE AGAIN SLIP OUT FROM UNDER.

D. ON THE AFRICAN SIDE, EVERYTHING DEPENDS NOW ON GETTING ZANU AND ANC (NKOMO) TO GO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE TOGETHER. THERE IS NOW REASON THEY CANNOT DO SO; IN FACT THERE IS EVERY GOOD ARGUMENT FOR IT, SINCE THE NEW ZIMBABWE SHOULD BE A MULTI-PARTY STATE.

4. CHARGE' ASKED IF THERE WAS ANYTHING TO PRESS REPORTS THAT "FRONT-LINE" PRESIDENTS WERE TO HOLD A "SUMMIT" IN GABORONE, OR IF THAT REPORT WAS SIMPLY BASED ON OBVIOUS FACT THAT THE PRESIDENTS (LESS NYERERE) WILL BE CONVERGING ON GABORONE FOR THE TENTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS. LEGWAILA SAID THERE WAS NOT "SUMMIT" PLANNED, AND CONFIRMED THAT NYERERE WAS NOT RPT NOT COMING TO BOTSWANA.

ALBERTI

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